Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 218644
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

DRAFTED BY:UNA:JFTEFFT
APPROVED BY:UNA:AFHOLLOWAY
S/S-O:TMARTIN
----------076836 131533Z /44
O 131448Z SEP 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 218644

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 6687 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS JERUSALEM DTD 9/7/77.

QUOTE S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6687

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PBOR, US, IS, LE
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: STATE 212440

1. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AT NOON TODAY AND DURING A ONE-HOUR DISCUSSION PRESSED HARD FOR AN ISRAELI COMMITMENT NOT TO UNDERTAKE ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE PROPOSED SOUTH LEBANESE CEASE FIRE PLAN. FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN, DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN AND DCM ALSO PARTICIPATED IN MEETING.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 218644

2. AFTER I WENT CAREFULLY THROUGH ALL THE TALKING POINTS IN REFTEL TO WHICH BEGIN LISTENED WITH GREAT ATTENTIVE-NESS, THE INITIAL ISRAELI REACTION WAS OBDURATE AND INFLEXIBLE ON THE CORE QUESTION OF THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF ARMED PALESTINIANS SOUTH OF THE LITANI RIVER IN THE SO-CALLED "MIDDLE SECTOR" AND IN THE ARQOUB. DAYAN LED THE ATTACK BY STATING HE COULD NOT

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

IN GOOD CONSCIENCE ADVISE THE PRIME MINISTER TO BECOME A PARTNER IN ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH INVOLVED LEAVING ANY ARMED PALESTINIANS SOUTH OF THE LITANI. HE REPEATEDLY AND EMOTIONALLY ARGUED THAT THEIR PRESENCE WOULD REPRESENT A GUARANTEE OF FUTURE SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR ISRAEL ON ITS NORTHERN FRONTIERS.

3. BEGIN VOICED SIMILAR APPREHENSIONS, NOTING ISRAEL HAD LEARNED THROUGH BITTER EXPERIENCE WITH THE PLO THAT ONE COULD NOT RELY ON ITS PROMISES. HE WAS ALSO SKEPTICAL OVER LEBANESE ASSURANCES ON THE NUMBER AND FIRE POWER OF WEAPONS TO BE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF THE PLO. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IT WAS "NOT ACCIDENTAL" THE PALESTINIANS WERE TO BE PERMITTED TEN KILOMETERS FROM THE ISRAELI BORDER. "THEY WANT TO KEEP US IN RANGE," HE SAID.

4. WEIZMAN RAISED THE ISSUE THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE BOUTROS PROPOSAL WOULD LEAVE THE SITUATION EAST OF THE LITANI IN THE ARQOUB ALMOST UNCHANGED. HE FAILED TO SEE WHAT ISRAEL GAINED FROM THIS. BEGIN ADDED HIS ANXIETY OVER THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IMPLICATIONS THAT A TACIT BLESSING OF THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF BOTH ARMED PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE SYRIAN ARMY NOT FAR AWARY WOULD HOLD FOR ISRAEL. DAYAN REMINDED HIM THAT AFTER YEARS OF BITTER EXPERIENCES WITH

ARMED PALESTINIANS, EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIAN NOW ALL REFUSE TO PERMIT THEIR PRESENCE NEAR THEIR FRONTIERS. HE THOUGHT A DIRECT AGREEMENT WITH LEBANON GOVERNING THE PRESENCE OF OUTSIDE FORCES WAS BETTER SUITED TO ISRAEL'S LONG-TERM SECURITY NEEDS.

5. I ARGUED EACH OF THESE POINTS AS THEY WERE RAISED, DRAWING ON SOME OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY KHATIB (BEIRUT 4372), AND RETUNRING CONSTANTLY TO THE ESSENTIAL ISSUES THAT (A) THE LEGANESE WERE NOT ASKING FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE GOI'S ASSURANCES IT WOULD NOT TORPEDO A CEASE FIRE, SUBSEQUENT WITHDRAWAL OF THE BULK OF THE PALESTINIAN FORCES, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY INTO THE TEN KILOMETER BELT, AND (B) THAT BY ALLOWING THIS PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED ISRAEL'S IMMEDIATE SECURITY CONCERNS WOULD BE GREATLY LESSENDED AND ITS LONGER-TERM INTERESTS OF HAVING A PEACEFUL, STABLE NORTHERN NEIGHBOR WOULD BE VASTLY ENHANCED.

6. THERE WERE MOMENTS, ESPECIALLY WHEN DAYAN SKATED CLOSE TO GROSS DISTORTIONS OF BOTH THE SITUATION AND

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

MY PRESENTATION, WHEN THE DISCUSSION BECMAE SOMEWHAT HEATED. IT CERTAINLY NEVER LACKED IN FRANKNESS. BEGIN EVENTUALLY REELED IN HIS TWO CABINET COLLEAGUES BY FIRMLY STATING THAT I HAD HEARD THE GOI'S "PRE-LIMINARY REACTIONS" AND HE WOULD NOW LIKE TIME TO CONSULT FURTHER. I STRESSED THE NEED FOR AN URGENT RESPONSE FOR BOUTROS. HE SAID IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GET BACK TO US PRIOR TO SUNDAY'S CABINET MEETING.

7. BEGIN THEN FLOATED THE IDEA OF ATTEMPTING TO IMPOSE AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE TO STOP THE BLOODSHED PENDING FURTHER ISRAELI CONSIDERATION OF THE SITUATION. DAYAN FAVORED THIS, BUT THEN PROMPTLY WANDERED INTO ANOTHER EMOTIONAL MONOLOUGE ABOUT THE LONGER-TERM PROBLEM
SECRET

SECRET

OF ARMED PLO SOLDIERS ON ISRAEL'S NORTHERN FRONTIERS.

8. AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THIS ASPECT THERE ABRUPTLY FOLLOWED CLEAR-CUT ASSURANCES FROM BEGIN, DAYAN AND WEIZMAN THAT WHETHER ISRAEL LIKED THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT OR NOT, IT WOULD IN NO WAY IMPEDE ANY PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A CEASEFIRE. BEGIN THEN SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CONTACT THE CHRISTIAN FORCES IMMEDIATELY TO EXPLAIN TO THEM WHAT WAS IN THE OFFING AND TO GET THEIR VIEWS. HE ORDERED WEIZMAN TO DO THIS TODAY. WEIZMAN SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE "NO TROUBLE" WITH THE CHRISTIANS. SENSING A BREAK-THROUGH IN THE CONVERSATION, I DECIDED TO OFFER THE MAP COORDINATES OF THE NEW POSTS IN THE MIDDLE SECTOR AND THE ARQOUB. BEGIN ACCEPTED WITH ALACRITY AND SAID THIS COULD BE VERY HELPFUL WITH THE CABINET. I ARRANGED TO HAVE OUR ARMA MAKE THIS INFOR-MATION AVAILABLE TO WEIZMAN'S OFFICE THIS AFTERNOON.

9. WE ENDED THE CONVERSATION WITH BEGIN ASSURING ME HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH ON SUNDAY AFTER THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE (IT WILL MEET AT 0800 HOURS) AND THE FULL CABINET MEETING WILL FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

10. COMMENT: I HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE FIRST FIFTY MINUTES OF THIS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT CONVER-SATION HAD UNDRGONE A DRY-RUN PRIOR TO OUR ARRIVAL. WHILE DAYAN'S EMOTIONALISM CAN IN PART BE EXPLAINED AS TACTICAL, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT NEITHER HE, BEGIN NOR WEIZMAN FINDS IT EASY TO GIVE ON THEIR LON-HELD CONVICTION THAT LEBANON SOUTH AND EAST OF THE LITANI MUST BE PURGED OF ARMED PALESTINIANS. MOREOVER,
SECRET

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

THE FACT THAT THIS PROPOSED AGREEMENT IS A LINIAL DESCENDENT OF THE 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT MAKES IT BOULY HARD FOR THE ISRAELIS TO GIVE EVEN TACIT APPROVAL. THIS CONCERN, WHICH PERMEATED THE ENTIRE CONVERSATION, WILL OBVIOUSLY BE THE DOMINANT FACTOR IN THEIR DELIBER-ATIONS ON THEIR NEXT MOVE. I SENSED ALL THREE MEN WERE SHAKEN BY NEWS OF THE SIZE OF THE FORCE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN THE ARQOUB. DESPITE MY EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THEM THAT THE TERRAIN AND THE WEATHER COMBINED WITH THEIR OWN CLEAR-CUT TACTICAL DOMINATION OF THE AREA WOULD INHIBIT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PALESTINAINS REMAINING THERE, EACH OF THEM REMINDED ME THAT SO LONG AS THERE WERE PALESTINIANS NEAR THE BORDER IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT ISRAEL WOULD SUFFER CASUALITEIS THROUGH RANDOM SHOOTING, MINES, ETC. WEIZMAN MADE MUCH OF THE FACT THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY WOULD NOT BE IN PLACE ANYWHERE EAST OF THE HASBANI RIVER. BEGIN, DAYAN AND WEISMAN DID RELUCTANTLY AGREE TO ACCEPT WITHOUT ARGUMENT THE NECESSITY FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS NEAR TYRE TO REMAIN.

11. INTERESTINLY, THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT COMMENT OR REACTION TO MY EXPLANATION OF OUR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF THE MARONIT CHRISTIANS AND THE "GOOD FENCE."

12. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION BEGIN APPEARED TO BACK OFF FROM HIS CEASEFIRE PROPOSAL, IN PART, I THINK, BECAUSE HE WANTED FIRST TO GET THE WORD TO THE CHRISTIAN FORCES. PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANTLY, I BELIEVE THAT AS HE FURTHER CONSIDERED THE SITUATION HE REALIZED THE NECESSITY FOR ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION WITH HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES. HE POINTEDLY REMINDED ME THAT ONLY THREE OF THE SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE MINISTERIAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE WERE IN THE ROOM.

13. THIS WILL BE A CLOSE ONE, BUT MY MONEY IS ON THE

FOLLOWING SCENARIO. WE WILL BE TOLD ON SUNDAY:
A. ISRAEL WELCOMES THE PROPOSED CEADEFIRE AND IS PREPARED TO COOPERATE FULLY IN ITS MAINTENANCE.
B. ISRAEL FURTHER WELCOMES THE WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIAN FORCES FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND WILL DO NOTHING TO IMPEDE THIS OPERATION. ISRAEL ALSO COMMITS ITSELF TO ASSERT ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MARONITE FORCES IN THE SOUTH NOT TO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

INTERFERE WITH THE WITHDRAWAL.
C. ISRAEL IN NO WAY ACCEPTS OR ENDORSES THE SHTAWRAH AGREEMENT OR THE 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT AS SUCH, AND DOES NOT ACCEPT THE LEGITIMACY FOR THE NEED FOR ANY ARMED PALESITNIANS TO REMAIN SOUTH OF THE LITANI OR IN THE ARQOUB SECTOR IN SUCH FORCE AND IN SUCH PROPINQUITY TO ISRAEL'S BORDERS. ISRAEL RESERVES ITS RIGHT TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS MAY SUBSEQUENTLY BE NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF FUTURE EVENTS TO PROTECT IST SECURITY.

14. AFTER RETURNING TO THE EMBASSY I SAW THE REPORT FROM OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BEIRUT THAT GENERAL KHOURY DID NOT EXPECT TO DEPLOY FORCES TO SOUTHER LEBANON BEFORE NINETY DAYS. THIS DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS THE OTHER RECENT BEIRUT REPORTING--AND IF TRUE WOULD PUT INTO GRAVE DOUBT MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE JUST TOLD BEGIN.
LEWIS UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMISTICE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE218644
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: UNA:JFTEFFT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770331-0847
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770969/aaaacgao.tel
Line Count: 241
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4cc87f47-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 212440
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1290002
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PBOR, US, IS, LE, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4cc87f47-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009